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SUBJECT: EASTERN DRC NOTES - JULY 30

REF: KINSHASA 711

¶1. (U) The information contained in this cable consists principally of spot reports from various sources. This cable is not exhaustive, nor can all the information contained therein be confirmed at this time.

Security Situation - LRA

¶2. (SBU) During two July 11 LRA attacks on villages near Faradje, six civilians were killed and 12 were abducted. On July 13 FARDC attacked an LRA position in the same area and claimed four LRA casualties. In two separate actions on July 18, the FARDC clashed with the LRA near Banda, leaving two rebels dead. FARDC claims one LRA cadre was captured and one surrendered in a clash 11 kilometers west of Faradje.

Security Situation - Ituri

¶3. (SBU) A group of 150-170 troops allegedly identified as FPJC ("Front Congolaise pour la Justice au Congo" in French) surrounded the town of Rwampara (south of the border town of Kasenyi) on July 16 and looted food and valuables. The FARDC responded on July 17 but the perpetrators had fled. MONUC confirmed the numbers of looters as between 150-170, but could not confirm their identity. The number is larger than suspected FPJC concentrations in the area, and a MONUC source speculated that the looters may have been bandits from a nearby village.

¶4. (SBU) FARDC Operation "Iron Stone" (phase III) increased pace from July 20 with a series of actions against FRPI ("Front de Resistance Patriotique d'Ituri" in French) in villages southwest of Bunia. The FARDC encountered active resistance in Matalala, but was able to advance into areas further to the west. An estimated 20-25 FRPI fired their weapons around Gety (east of Matatala) in what may have been a diversionary action.

Security Situation -- North Kivu

¶5. (SBU) A Congolese MSF-France employee was shot and killed in Kiwanja during an apparent robbery on July 20 (reftel).

¶6. (SBU) MONUC reports that FDLR surrenders are up, especially in North Kivu. Seventeen FDLR surrendered to MONUC four kilometers north of Kiwanja during the week of July 13.

¶7. (SBU) The FARDC killed two Pareco milita members and captured 13 in a firefight north of Kiwanja on July 20-21. A clash with FDLR in the village of Mbugawiya resulted in two FDLR killed. The FARDC and national police (PNC) may be dissatisfied with the levels of MONUC support for operations against both FDLR and Pareco around Mbugawiya; MONUC reports that FARDC troops pelted a MONUC patrol

with stones. FARDC troops have also been looting villages to the north and south of Kanyabayonga.

Security Situation -- South Kivu

¶18. (SBU) The FARDC attacked FDLR "Rainbow" Brigade's headquarters near Ndolera in Kalehe on July 21, captured the brigade commander, Major John, and - after a three-hour pitched battle - drove the FDLR from the base. No casualty figures were immediately available. (Comment: The FARDC 33rd Brigade carried out the action and includes a high proportion of former CNDP. End comment).

¶19. (SBU) On July 16, FARDC killed two FDLR at Mashere near Bunyakiri. On July 18, there was a series of engagements in and around Mwenga: the FARDC attacked three FDLR positions, including a training camp, and claim four killed and 25 captured (Note: MONUC doubts the veracity of these numbers. End note.). The FDLR simultaneously attacked the FARDC base in Mwenga. There were no reported casualties. On July 21 at Sange, north of Uvira, the FDLR fired rockets on a FARDC border post, causing the latter to flee. MONUC suspects this was the intention and that the FDLR used the opportunity to smuggle men and/or weapons and ammunition into the DRC across the border with Burundi.

Integration and DDRRR

¶10. (SBU) MONUC reports that 44 ex-combatants, collectively producing one weapon between them, arrived in Luberizi July 18-19. (Comment: Integration, despite being officially closed as of July

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15, apparently remains open for business. End comment). Colonel Abuta, the leader of a Mai-Mai Zbuloni splinter group has surrendered to the FARDC at Uvira. He told UN Plice (UNPOL) that the leader of the remaining Zauloni splinter groups, Major Fujo, will also soo enter the DDRRR process. It is unclear how many mn either Mai Mai commander will bring with them.

¶11. (SBU) A source in the MONUC DDRRR reports hat FDLR requests for repatriation are rising, ad recent FDLR applicants include a captain and tree majors. Two of the majors are from the FDLR-RU faction, including one who was assigned to "kee an eye on" the FDLR-RUD troops in Kasiki and wh went to Rwanda for a "go and see" visit earlierthis year. The captain who recently defected said supplies have not run low in most areas, but thatcommanders are finding it increasingly difficultto justify why the FDLR is carrying on the fightto younger recruits. FDLR movement provides newopportunities for rank and file troops to defect. The FDLR continues to recruit, however, and contiues to maintain a training school for recent recruits.

¶12. (SBU) MONUC reports that many of the1000-2000 Mai Mai who have gathered in Kndu, Maniema Province are opting for demobilization and community projects rather than joining the FARDC. In Luberezi, 484 militia members have chosen to return to their villages. A UN source notes that they are not under the same pressure as North Kivu armed groups to integrate, and thus inflate their numbers so that their commanders can lay claim to higher FARDC ranks.

¶13. (SBU) Comment: The FARDC has been more active recently in implementing Operation Kimia II, and is squeezing the FDLR in several locations, especially in South Kivu. The casualty figures are not reliable -- there is no doubt FARDC casualties are underreported -- but MONUC does attempt to verify FDLR killed by investigating the number of bodies recovered. The reports of clashes are reasonably accurate, but pitched battles remain rare and casualties low. The FDLR may be inconvenienced and perhaps even demoralized, but it is far from eliminated. Still, with MONUC fuel and food, an improved record of salary payments (due in large part to the June 30 Independence Day Goma visit of President Kabila), and a reliance on former CNDP for aggressive actions, the FARDC has marginally improved upon its dismal record as a fighting force. Civilians have paid a heavy price, but the UN political leadership appears determined to see the operation through. End comment.

